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## Exhibit aims to end political division

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Colors collide in an unusual exhibition at Phoenix Art Museum that is being coordinated by a North Central artist and focuses on ending division while promoting national pride.



North Central artist Ann Morton has organized The Violet Protest, an exhibition with thousands of textiles in blue and red that aims to end division among political leaders (photo by Bill Timmerman Photography).

Ann Morton: The Violet Protest is a striking display of thousands of textiles with blue and red in them created by artists in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, Washington, D.C., and five provinces in Canada. Morton is organizing the display, which features pieces that are quilted, knitted, crocheted and formed with applique. These elaborately designed and assembled textiles feature hearts, stars, flowers, faces, animals and other images. Stacks of textiles that American artists made are piled up to form the letters “US.” The project was possible after Morton received a \$5,000 Arlene and Morton Scult Contemporary Forum Artist Award, offered by Contemporary Forum.

Morton said she had been thinking about this exhibition for many years as she has been worried that members of U.S. Congress from different political parties have not been willing to work together to take action.

“I’d been thinking for many years really about my concern that the Congress was just not able to govern because of the deep divides between the parties and the unwillingness to reach across the aisle and compromise,” she said. “When the opportunity at the art museum came up, I knew that I wanted to do a public project.”

The word “violet” in the project’s name represents the color formed when red (associated with the Republican Party) and blue (linked to the Democratic Party) blend.

Morton said about 60 percent of the textiles in the museum exhibit were made by Valley artists while she expects to receive thousands more pieces to add to the display. She also is making sweaters to put on the three American flags erected in the collection.

“The response has been almost overwhelming, very surprising and very positive,” Morton said.

The Lisa Sette Gallery represents Morton, who is a fiber artist. Her work has been exhibited at the Mesa Arts Center and many other venues. Morton also teaches a textiles class every spring at Mesa Community College.

The exhibit will be up at Phoenix Art Museum at 1625 N. Central Ave. through Sunday, Sept. 5. After it closes, the textiles will be sent to all members of Congress. Each member will receive up to 25 pieces. To learn more, visit [www.violetprotest.com](http://www.violetprotest.com).